

TUTORIAL 3 WEB STRATEGY: ASSESSMENT AND COMPONENTS



This tutorial has been produced by The Australian Tourism Data Warehouse as part of the complete online education program, Tourism e-kit

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WEB STRATEGY: ASSESSMENT & COMPONENTS

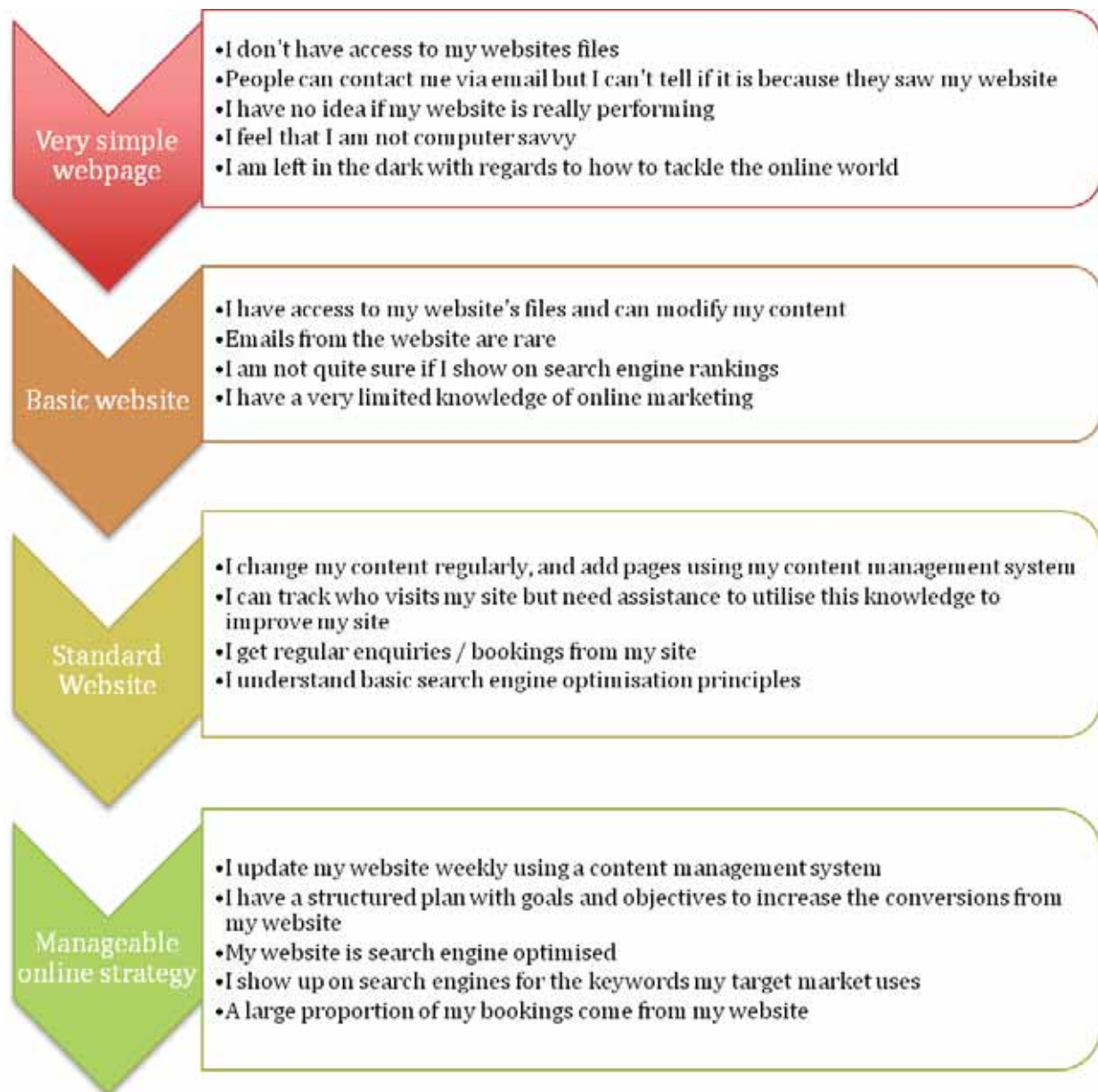
Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: Initial assessment of my website

This tutorial will help you assess your e-readiness level. It will also review the different components of a successful online strategy. It is recommended you first read the previous tutorial which conducts an analysis of your existing website.

1) WHERE AM I NOW?

The below chart will assist you defining the level of your business online-readiness. Four levels, from having a very simple webpage to a manageable online strategy have been identified. Assess which level you best fit in by reviewing the dot points.



2) WHAT IS THE NEXT STAGE I CAN REACH?

Tick your current level in the first line of check boxes and aim to increase it by one within the next 12 months. When you read the other tutorials the abundance of information could be a little overwhelming. Come back to this tutorial and re-focus: you are only going to aim for the next level.



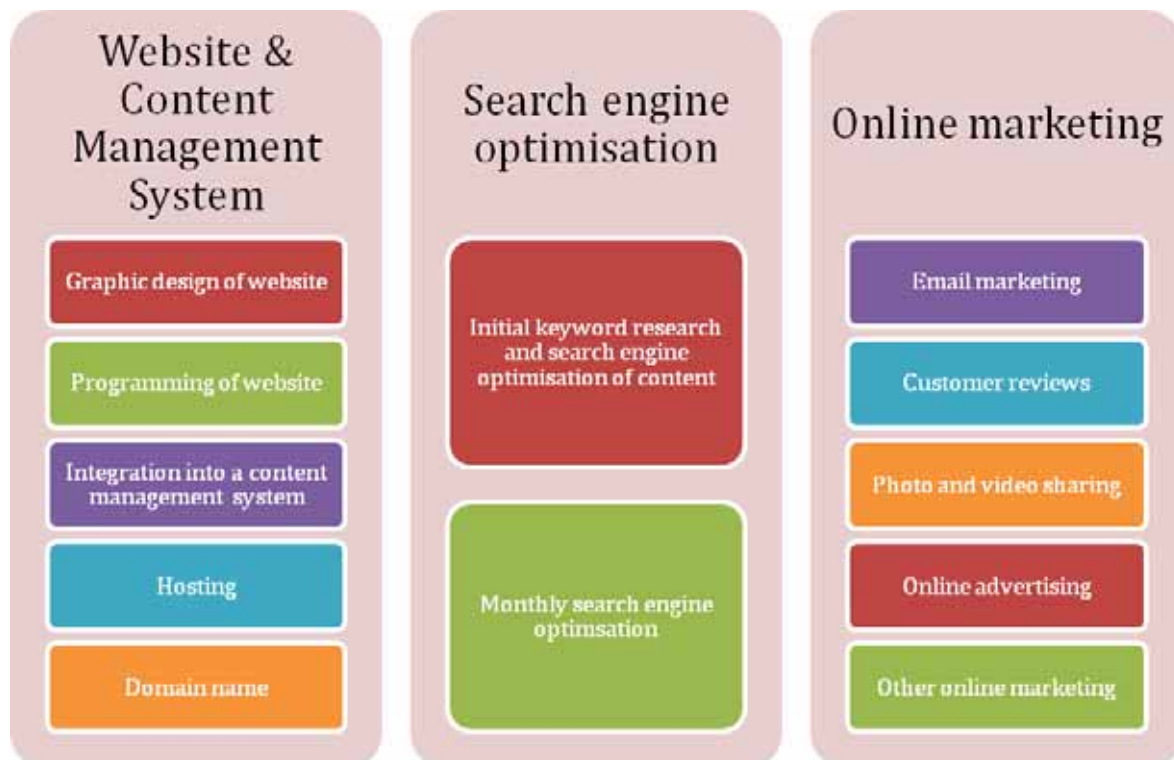
Level my web strategy is currently at:

Level I am planning to reach in the next 12 months:

3) COMPONENTS OF AN ONLINE STRATEGY

Now that you have assessed your current level, let's look further into the elements of a successful online strategy.

A web or online strategy is achieved by balancing three components, which will be further analysed in the paragraphs below:



4) COMPONENT 1: WEBSITE AND CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

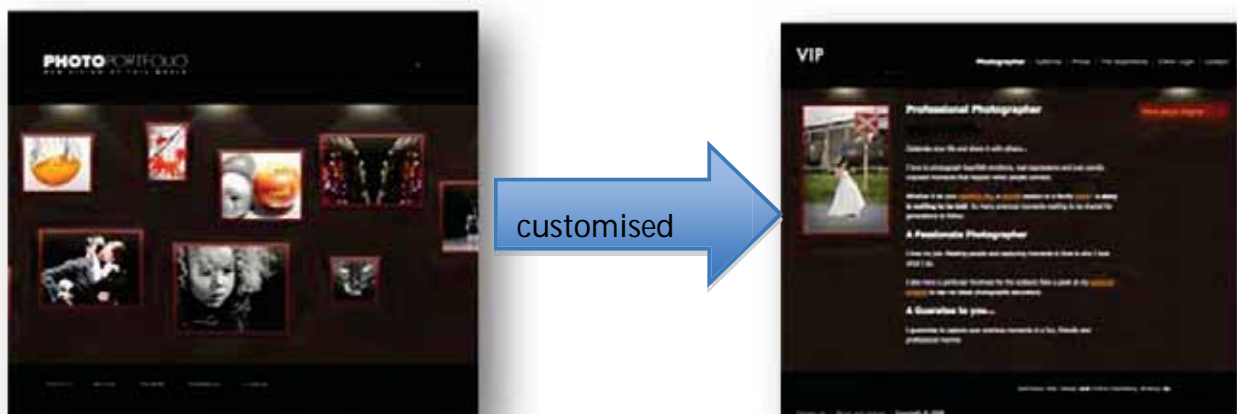
Fully customisable and professionally designed websites for small and medium tourism businesses should not cost in excess of AUD6,000 dollars.

a) Design options

The graphic design component is generally the most expensive one, as it involves a long consultation process with a specialised web designer. This cost could easily reach up to half the cost of your new site.

To minimise the cost of the design process, many web development firms offer the opportunity to modify existing website templates. Some firms might simply get one of their in-house templates and customise it for your site, without mentioning to you that it is based on a template. More customer-focused companies might give you broader options and ask you to choose amongst a series of templates they own. They could also refer you to a template-dedicated website such as www.templatemonster.com and let you decide which template you like best.

The example below shows a template from www.templatemonster.com, which has been customised to suit the needs of a client. The client paid AUD80 for the template + AUD80 for design modification, instead of paying AUD1,500 for a graphic designer to design the website look and feel from beginning to end.



Screen capture credit: UntangleMyWeb.com

Talk to your web development company to assess the options they offer. Choosing a template-based design will not only save money but also a lot of your time!

b) Summary: website technology and content management system

Below are the key points to consider in terms of web programming and content management system.

- Your website should be developed in XHTML and **table-less** CSS. You do not need to understand what XHTML and **table-less** CSS are but need to ensure your web developer is programming using these languages. If they don't, seek a new one. **We recommend you stay away from Flash**, as it is not a search engine friendly technology.
- Web developers will sometimes quote you a price for your website based on the number of pages it will have. This is an old practice as you can now easily create a new page yourself using an

appropriate content management system. Only the design component can be quoted per page if you want the look and feel of each page to be different. Look for a web developer that will provide you with a content management system that will allow you to create new pages yourself.

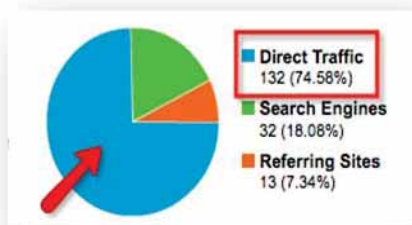
- The content management system installed on your website should be search engine friendly. The tutorial about content management systems will help you assess this.

5) COMPONENT 2: SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

Search engine optimisation is to a website what wheels are to a car.

A non-optimised website will provide you with a very low return on investment and therefore with very little business. An easy way to find out if your website is optimised for search engines is to look at your website's data which is captured by analytics programs such as Google Analytics. If your website is optimised for search engines, there should be a lot of traffic referred to it from search engines. Let's look at the pie charts below to see which one of the two examples is an optimised site. This diagnosis is available in the majority of web analytics programs.

The first picture below shows that the bulk of traffic is coming directly to the website (e.g. users enter the address of the website in their browser directly). This website is missing out on a lot of business that could be brought by search engines. It is not search engine optimised.



The second picture reveals that the majority of the traffic to the website is brought by search engines. Search engines are promoting the website for free! This is the sign of a well optimised website.

Screen captures copyright: Google

97% OF SEARCHES START WITH A SEARCH ENGINE, AND GOOGLE IS BY FAR THE MOST WIDELY USED IN AUSTRALIA. WE RECOMMEND YOU WORK WITH SEARCH ENGINES.

When sourcing quotes for a web developer or an online marketing agency, it is crucial you ensure they are familiar with coding a website for search engines.

Web developers are not always aware of search engine optimisation principles. This is why it is important to work with a company that has expertise in both fields.

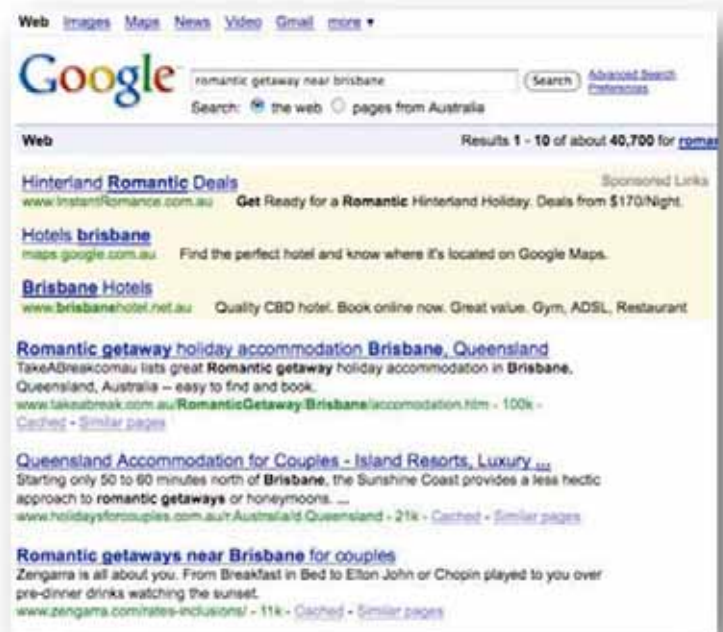
Lastly, be aware that search engine optimisation is not a one-off but a continuous process. Make sure you put a plan in place to manage what needs to be done for your business to stay on top of search engine rankings.



PROVIDED YOUR WEBSITE'S CONTENT IS OPTIMISED AND YOU HAVE A CONTINUOUS SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION STRATEGY IN PLACE, YOUR WEBSITE SHOULD START TO RANK HIGH ON THE SEARCH ENGINE RESULTS PAGE WHEN PEOPLE TYPE IN YOUR KEYWORDS.

*Imagine you are a bed and breakfast offering a romantic getaway near Brisbane. The keyword research done by your optimiser reveals that **romantic getaway near Brisbane** is a phrase often searched on Google. You should then rank on the first few pages of Google for that keyword.*

The screen shot on the right shows the results of a search for “romantic getaway near brisbane”. The third, non-commercial listing “Romantic getaways near Brisbane for couples” is a small bed and breakfast website that has been optimised for those keywords.



Screen capture copyright: Google

6) COMPONENT 3: ONLINE MARKETING

Online marketing encompasses all the online activities you can undertake to promote your website. They are generally separated in two categories: free or involving payment. The paragraphs below will summarise these activities.

a) Free activities

- **Social marketing:** taking advantage of free tools such as forums, social platforms such as Facebook, photo and video sharing to promote your business. Creating videos of your product and posting them on YouTube.com, posting your photos on Flickr.com, utilising platforms such as Facebook.com.
- **Search:** appearing in search engine listings is free. All it requires is a solid search engine optimisation strategy.
- **Linking strategy:** getting other relevant sites to link to your website does not involve money, but relies

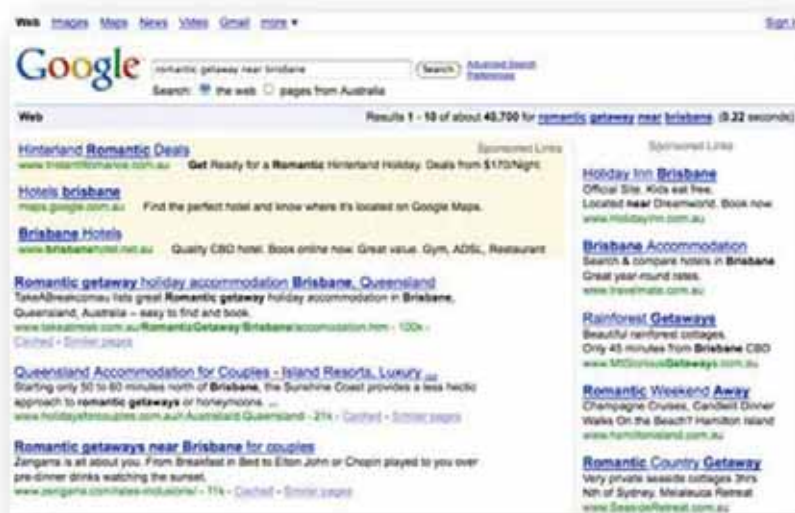
on the content provided on your website being relevant to the sites linking to you. Having quality and relevant websites linking to you will make a positive difference in your search engine rankings. Sourcing links is part of your search engine optimisation strategy.

b) Paid-for activities

- **Search engine marketing (SEM), also known as pay per click (PPC):** paying search engine to promote a website. The key difference with unpaid (also known as organic) search engine results is how they are positioned on the page. The key players in PPC are:
 - Google: Google AdWords
 - Yahoo: Yahoo! Search Marketing
 - MSN: Microsoft adCenter

The search engine results in the below image are a combination of organic search engine rankings (which directly result from a well-executed search engine optimisation strategy) and search engine marketing rankings.

The organic results are on the left, below the yellow “sponsored links” results. The SEM results are above the organic results and in the right column.



Screen capture copyright:
Google

Other online marketing activities that a small tourism business would have to pay for would be for instance:

- Email marketing
- Having an ad in the Yellow Pages online
- Having a banner advertisement on another site
- Paying for a link from a travel directory

7) RELATED MATERIAL

a) Related tutorials

- Initial assessment of my website
- Web strategy: cost and timings
- Target market 101
- Search engines 101
- Bringing people to my site with e-marketing